



Greenleaf (*Desmodium intortum*) for livestock feed on small-scale farms

Objective

To provide high quality forage for livestock feed in tropical subhumid areas

Description

- Vigorous deep rooted trailing and climbing perennial
- Fast growing giving good ground cover in 4–5 months
- Combines well with tall grasses and creeping species
- Adapted to a variety of soils and grows well on acidic soils
- Shade tolerant
- Can withstand lower temperatures than most tropical legumes
- Used for cut and carry, hay and silage

Limits of use

- No tolerance to salinity
- Poor drought tolerance
- Not adapted to areas with frost
- Poor persistence under heavy grazing

Management

Field preparation—well prepared seedbed

Establishment—broadcast seeds at 2–3 kg/ha. Cuttings may also be used since they root readily

Fertilizer—requires adequate level of fertility. Apply 100 kg DAP per hectare

Weeding—slow establisher, weed once after four weeks and again after eight weeks, when well established will suppress weed

Harvesting—first time at flowering after about one year, then after it is possible to cut every six months

Performance

Expect about 19 t/ha of fresh forage with a crude protein of about 18%

This information leaflet on livestock feeds and feeding technologies for small-scale farmers is developed through collaboration between ILRI and its partners.

For further information, contact

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